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PROGRAM Crossfire

STATION CNN-TV Network

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SUBJECT Zbigniew Brzezinski/Central America

ANNOUNCER: From Washington, Crossfire. The hosts for Crossfire: on the left, Tom Braden; on the right, Pat Buchanan. In the crossfire, Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Adviser.

TOM BRADEN: The Russian people don't know it yet, but their Foreign Minister has accepted an invitation from President Reagan to meet with him at the White House two weeks from tomorrow. Questions are all over Washington: Why did the President extend the invitation? Was it politics? Why did Gromyko accept? Does he want to give Reagan a leg up, or does he expect that Reagan will stick to Star Wars and be branded as an obstacle to negotiations?

There are a lot of such questions. And who might be able to answer them? Zbigniew Brzezinski.

PAT BUCHANAN: Dr. Brzezinski, Andrei Gromyko and the Soviets are very sophisticated about American politics. They know that Gromyko going to the White House is going to undercut Mondale's big argument that he can't talk to the Russians. Why would Gromyko be so generous to Ronald Reagan at this point? Have the Russians concluded, "Reagan's got this thing and we'd better move early"?

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI: There are two reasons, I think, potentially three. One, the chances are they have concluded that Ronald Reagan will be reelected. And from their point of view, it might make more sense to deal with him now, somewhat, rather than later, when he might need them less.

Secondly, I think the Soviets -- and this is much more

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important -- are beginning to realize that their policy of trying to intimidate the West, of creating artificially a crisis atmosphere in order to get the West, and the United States, particularly, to make concessions has backfired. And the Soviet Union has become more isolated internationally in the last two years since at any point from the time of Stalin's death.

BRZEZINSKI: And three, they may be calculating that by going to the White House, if they don't get something from Reagan, they can walk out, blame him for the continued stalemate, get the public opinion to be disappointed, and hurt him.

BUCHANAN: Gromyko may be about to sandbag the Administration if he comes in and demands, for example, a moratorium on testing ASATs, and Reagan says, "We can't give you that," and Gromyko goes out and says, "We came and asked for a simple thing, and we cannot even get that. We cannot deal with this man."

Do you think the Reagan Administration is taking a risk, then?

BRZEZINSKI: There is a risk, but I think this risk can be anticipated. And one way of anticipating it is not to build up expectations.

BRADEN: Wouldn't Reagan be able to handle that by simply not commenting very much during the talks?

BRZEZINSKI: Well, I would think, if I were Reagan, I would say to Gromyko, "Yes, we're willing to negotiate." After all, nothing's going to be resolved for weeks, anyway.

BRADEN: Tell me, why would the Soviet Foreign Minister do this and then keep it a secret from the Russian people?

BRZEZINSKI: Well, they are going to inform the Soviet people. I don't think there's anything particularly unusual about it. They just don't...

BRADEN: Well, it's been out for two days, and Bob Kaiser reports in the Washington Post there hasn't been a word of it in the press.

BRZEZINSKI: Yes, but don't forget they have had a vicious anti-American campaign going. They have had a personally vicious anti-Reagan campaign going. It takes them time to change gears and to let it be known that this is going to happen. They're going to treat it as a very routine visit, normal, when the Foreign Minister goes to the United Nations.

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BRADEN: Dr. Brzezinski, let me go down south for a minute. Congress cut out the funds for the Contras in Nicaragua.

BRZEZINSKI: Yes. A big mistake, in my view.

BRADEN: All right. But whether you think it's a mistake or not, as I read what's happening -- and I speak with some knowledge of the past on this -- what's happening, according to the State Department spokesmen, is that a million and a half dollars a month is coming down from voluntary contributions by American businessmen, plus government money from Israel and Guatemala and Taiwan. Now just let me go on. My scenario is that in Israel, Guatemala and Taiwan the station chief is picking up a satchel and delivering the money to the Finance Minister and saying, "Here. Do us a favor." And in New York, Chicago, Cleveland, etcetera, certain station chiefs, or maybe Bill Casey himself, is saying, "Now, look, send a contribution. I'll take care of it."

Now, I know what your feeling is on this. But are we going to have a government according to the Constitution of the United States, or two governments, one by the Constitution and one by Bill Casey?

BRZEZINSKI: Well, Tom, you know, the contingency funds, the unassigned contingency funds of the agency are in fact very small, and the Congress knows exactly what they are. So you cannot have funds of this size being transferred out of that relatively limited fund that the CIA is granted by Congress. So I don't think the CIA can be funneling in the money. It may be encouraging this to be done, but that's a different issue.

And after all, in the U.S. a lot of people...

BRADEN: Is it likely that the average businessman in New York says, "Oh, gee. I'm so worried about those..."

BRZEZINSKI: Tom, I don't think this is being done by the average businessman.

[Laughter]

BUCHANAN: Has Mondale consulted you?

BRZEZINSKI: No.

BUCHANAN: Not at all?

BRZEZINSKI: Not recently.

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BUCHANAN: But he's in a campaign and you were the National Security Adviser when he was the principal political adviser to Jimmy Carter. Why hasn't he consulted you?

BRZEZINSKI: Because he probably doesn't think that my advice is any good.

BUCHANAN: He doesn't.

What kind of grades do you give President Reagan in foreign policy, overall?

BRZEZINSKI: Oh, I can't grade him. I would say on some things I agree with him, on some things I disagree with him. I support his position vis-a-vis the Soviets currently. I think that's been done reasonably well.

BUCHANAN: You support him on Central America, obviously, the Contras.

BRZEZINSKI: On some aspects of Central America. I think we should have also moved towards the Contadora formula much sooner. I think he's been too passive on the Middle East. I think we haven't handled the Chinese issue all that well. So it's a mixed performance.

But on the central issue, the American-Soviet relationship, I think we ought to have bipartisan support, and I don't think we should make that an object of partisan contests.

BUCHANAN: Who would you like to see managing American foreign policy the next four years?

BRZEZINSKI: Well, that's very hard to say. It depends who wins.

BUCHANAN: You've only got two guys. One of the two.

BRZEZINSKI: Oh, you mean between those two.

BUCHANAN: Yeah.

BRZEZINSKI: Oh, well, I'm going to work for bipartisan-ship rather than to take a partisan point of view.

BUCHANAN: In whose behalf would you prefer to work for bipartisanship?

BRZEZINSKI: I'm going to vote, but I'm not going to campaign.

BUCHANAN: But you voted for Carter-Mondale in '76 and

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you voted for Carter-Mondale in 1984. Can we assume you're going to vote for Mondale-Ferraro?

BRZEZINSKI: I don't think you can assume anything, because I'm going to vote privately. I'm not going to make a public endorsement.

BRADEN: Zbig, you're a Roman Catholic. I don't mean to be personal, but it would interest me to get your reaction to this. You are a Roman Catholic and you are also a conservative. The Catholic...

BRZEZINSKI: I'm conservative on some issues. The conservatives think I'm liberal on others.

BRADEN: All right, a conservative on foreign policy, let's say. Now, we've got a vice presidential candidate named Geraldine Ferraro whom the bishops, as she goes about the country, go right on the tube after she comes in to denounce her. Is there not some danger that we're going to get this election into a religious quarrel?

BRZEZINSKI: Well, there is such a danger. But unfortunately, I think she has contributed to it. That statement of hers that the Catholic position on abortion is such-and-such was very unfortunate. At the best, it was ineptly worded. And I think she should have stayed out of that.

BRADEN: Okay.

We've been talking with Zbigniew Brzezinski. We want to thank him for being our guest on Crossfire tonight.

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BUCHANAN: Tom, always interesting and instructive with Dr. Brzezinski. And if I had to guess now or deduce from what he said, I would say the Brzezinski household is leaning Republican in November.

BRADEN: Well, the ballot is secret, Pat, and I don't blame him for not telling you. After all, he did write something about Mondale in his book which would suggest that Mondale might have some prejudice toward him.

BUCHANAN: But it is a mark of how far out of touch Mondale is that Zbigniew Brzezinski is not openly saying we ought to all go with Fritz Mondale.

BRADEN: Well, the Russians know it too. Otherwise Gromyko wouldn't be coming over here. It gives Reagan a leg up.